

Orphan

I saw it
on the path
embedded in the cool mud,
a can
half in and out of the ground
as if rooted,
sprouted from a seed,
spawned by the great maple overhead,
or, perhaps, by the four-leaved ivy
that sprinkled the ground,
straining upward,
arms open to emptiness;
the can knows it does not belong,
its cool red faded to pink,
the letters
in white
barely visible in the shadows
of the living canopy above,
the wind breathing through the green.
The can is nestled into the ground
like a baby into his blanket.
It is here in this natural world of living things
that I pause to consider how the earth has
adopted this cast-off, disguising it
embracing it in her mud arms,
giving it a home,
raising a child that will not grow,
'til the rains cover it in a heavy blanket of soil,
and it sinks deeper into its unmarked grave
of dirt and green and brown moss.

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